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OF THE  
C O L O N I E S  
OF  
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA  
CONSIDERED NATIONALLY.

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posed Union has been, for some time, pretty freely canvassed by the press and by leading public men, in all parts of British America, and has been formally submitted to the consideration of the legislatures in two of the Provinces—Canada and Nova-scotia ;—and the entire absence, as yet, of any public indication of opposition to it, is a very significant fact. But although it may be said—as, for many reasons, we believe it reasonably may—that the leading statesmen of British America are profoundly impressed with the importance of the projected Union, and that a majority of the well informed classes look forward to its consummation with favorable eyes ; still it is important that the masses should be instructed with regard to it—still more important that all classes should be impressed with a sense of the necessity for early action in the matter. It is but natural that pressing and immediate wants should engage more attention than future advantages ; that our Provincial politicians should give more consideration to questions of local interest than to those more remote ones of national importance. It is the duty of those who can perceive the evils at times arising from this ever narrowing policy, to endeavour to restrain it within its proper limits. It is therefore the duty of such, in this instance, to lead the minds of the great body of the people away from party squabbles and exclusively local legislation, to a consideration of this important subject of British American nationality. To do this, is something which comes especially within the province of the press.

A Union of these Colonies, considered upon broad, national grounds, not with reference to its bearing upon existing class grievances and local interests, is a somewhat difficult subject to write upon. That the British North American Provinces should be politically combined into a single compact nation, appears almost self evident. There

are no arguments, few, if any, plausible objections, against such a project, to be combated. Why were they ever disunited? It was accident, not design, which led to their original organization as separate Colonies. The territory which they comprise fell under the dominion of the British Crown at different periods, a fact which accounts in part for their separate organization. In the early stages of their history as Colonies, they consisted but of so many wildernesses, each containing a small *nucleus* of peopled territory. These settled spots were far distant from each other, separated by unexplored wilds, and, with the means of communication in use at that day, intimate intercourse between them was impossible. A separate Colonial Government for each was indispensable. The causes which rendered separate Governments necessary, in the first instance are now removed. There is now no reason for a continuance of them unless we admit the validity of that last and poorest argument which ultra conservatism makes use of against every projected reform: "it must continue to be, because it always has been."

The natural barriers which once separated these Provinces from each other, are now in a great measure removed; those which remain are only artificial. They are like brothers who, owing to some misfortune, have been far removed from each other in infancy, each scarcely conscious of the other's existence; but who now, when in the full vigor of manhood, find themselves face to face, conscious of the natural ties which exist between them. For brothers, under such circumstances, to remain coldly aloof from each other, in accordance with the most chilling conventionalities ever observed in society between utter strangers, instead of cordially joining hands with the determination of spending the remainder of their days in mutual intercourse and fraternal love, would be scarcely more ridiculous than for the North Ameri-

can Provinces to remain longer sundered by the useless forms of a plurality of Colonial Governments. These Provinces now find themselves face to face. The wildernesses which once separated them have been prostrated, or penetrated in every direction, by the stalwart backwoodsman; the savages who once infested those forests have ceased to be a terror, and may be said no longer to exist; the obstacles which distance and which gulfs and seas formerly interposed to their mutual intercourse, are now in a great measure removed by modern science and skill. The communication between any two of the Provinces is now almost as free as that which exists between the different parts of any one of them; and an immediate effect of their political Union would be to make it quite as much so. Should any persons object to the distance of the remote sections of British America from each other as presenting great obstacles to the practicability of such a Union, they should bring to recollection the facilities which science and the engineering skill of the present day, as compared with that of the past, afford for overcoming all such difficulties. Within the memory of men still living, it required as much time to journey from Sydney to Halifax, or from the coast of Bay Chaleur to Fredericton as is now required to go from Halifax to Toronto. For near a hundred years after the Union of England and Scotland, the journey, or voyage, from Edinburgh to London was not usually made in less than a week. By passing across the State of Maine, Quebec, or Montreal, may now be reached from Halifax in 36 hours. But without going into a foreign country, at all, when the railroads now in course of construction in the Lower Provinces are completed, the journey from Halifax to Quebec may be made with ease and comfort in three days. Complete the chain of railway which all believe must, within a very few years, bind the provinces together,

whether they become politically more closely connected or not ; and the time will not occupy more than 36 hours, at the slowest rate of railway travelling. When the construction of this one wanting link in the railway chain, comprising the distance from Miramichi, or Woodstock, in New Brunswick, to Trois Pistoles, in Canada, shall have been undertaken and completed, the time occupied in travelling over the entire length of the Provinces, from 1800 to 2000 miles, will not be more than half that now required to make the journey from one extremity of Novascotia to the other, along our ordinary post roads.

Again, the facilities for communication by letter, within and between the Colonies, have undergone a still more striking improvement. Ten years ago, it required at least ten days for a letter to pass between Halifax and the Westernmost towns of Canada. The invention of the electric telegraph has effected a great revolution in this matter. There are no two towns, or villages, of a thousand inhabitants, in these provinces which *do not* now communicate with each other, by telegraph, in half a day, and which *may not* do so in one hour.

The progress of their individual developement has now brought the Provinces into immediate contact with each other. They are separated by no natural obstacles to their union ; they are subject to the same Crown ; they are governed according to the same constitutional principles ; they enjoy substantially the same laws ; they have the same great interests in common : they are every day attracted more closely towards each other by commercial intercourse and fraternal feeling ; and there is no good reason, no plausible pretext for longer upholding the artificial barriers which still hinder them from becoming *one* to all intents and purposes.



British North America occupies, at the present time, a singularly anomalous position. It presents the spectacle of a country inhabited by a people of whom it is no empty boast to say they are not inferior in enlightenment and intelligence to any in the world. They enjoy a constitutional Government, have been entrusted with the entire control of all their exclusively internal affairs, and have shown themselves not less capable of self government than any other people. Yet they have no voice whatever in anything which concerns their relations with foreign countries. British North America comprises, at this moment, the materials of a prosperous and powerful nation, and contains the elements, which, under favorable circumstances for development, will speedily make of it an empire inferior in power and influence to no one that has hitherto flourished upon earth. Yet it has no national existence whatever—it is a nonentity in the commonwealth of nations.

On several occasions, the Provinces have experienced not only the mortification but the serious injury to their interests which must naturally attend this peculiarity of their position. In two instances, large portions of our territory have been conceded to the United States. Great Britain gained nothing by the transactions, whilst British America incurred serious losses, and losses which must be felt more and more with the lapse of time. On a more recent occasion, the invaluable fisheries of our country were given away to the United States without any adequate return being made for them. This latter assertion may be denied. It may even be contended that British America has, by its own acts, admitted the justice of the Fishery Treaty of 1854; but the assent of the Provinces to an arrangement from which there was no escape, scarcely amounts to an admission either of the justice, or expediency, of such an arrangement. But without entering into this question at all, it

cannot be denied that, in each of these instances, the British Government, whilst treating with a foreign power relative to matters in which the North American section of the Empire was especially—nay, almost exclusively—interested, ignored the existence of these Provinces. In these instances, the injustice experienced by the Colonies was not of that immediately oppressive character which could provoke, or which would warrant, any rebellious acts on the part of the British Americans; but a consideration of them leads directly to certain inferences which cannot be too deeply impressed upon the minds of our readers. The whole Provinces of North America, as at present organized, have no voice in the British Imperial Government, and have no means of exercising any control over its acts. We know from actual experience that when their interests conflict with those of the single city of Manchester, or of any class, party, or section of Great Britain, they must be disregarded. The latter can make their influence *felt* in the Imperial Parliament; for they are represented there. The former are not so represented and they have no equivalent means of exerting an influence upon the Imperial Government. Mere remonstrances on their part will be unheeded.

Within the last few weeks, a project of the Imperial Government has been shadowed forth in the Ministerial organ, for transporting the felons of Great Britain to the Hudson's Bay Territory. This would be equivalent to making the North American Provinces so many penal colonies. There is nothing to prevent the transported convicts from making their way direct to Canada, except a toilsome journey such as the hunters and *voyageurs* of Hudsonia think nothing of, a journey which no one who had lived a few months in that territory would consider a serious difficulty in the way of getting out of it, if he were disposed to do

so. It has never been the habit of British statesmen to recede from a position once taken upon any point relating to the colonies; and it is not probable that they will do so in this instance.

The cases just mentioned may, by some persons, not be considered as involving very serious grievances. But admit the principle, and what may it not lead to? We have no security that the dearest interests of British America may not be sacrificed to further a pet project of some British statesman, or to gratify the desires, or appease the wrath, of some foreign ally. The Colonies possess no means of preventing such a misfortune. Nor is it at all without the bounds of probability that such may occur and be deeply injurious, if not ruinous to British American interests. In stating such an opinion and in asserting that the Imperial Government has already, in treating with foreign powers, ignored the interests of these Colonies, we mean to attribute to British statesmen no remarkable degree of moral turpitude, or political baseness. Admit them to be endowed with intellect, wisdom, and moral sense not very far above the average of men, we have no right to expect that they will be very ready to perceive, or evince any remarkable degree of vigor in guarding, the interests of this remote and colonial portion of the Empire. The education of the British statesman must naturally make him intimate only with "Home" politics, certainly not with those of the colonies. His constant dependence for his position upon the approval of the people of the United Kingdom, ensures his making their welfare his first consideration. That of the colonies whose approval, or disapproval, cannot affect him in any way, will be considered a matter of little moment.

How will a Union of the Colonies remedy all this? It will not enable the British Americans, like the people of the United Kingdom, to exert a direct control over members of the Imperial Go-



vernment. No ; but it will give to their country such a standing that no British statesman will believe that he can, any longer, venture to treat it as a political nonentity, for it would challenge the respect of the Imperial authorities. Nor, in such an event, *could* a British Home Government outrage the feelings, or trample upon the interests, of the young nation, with impunity. It could not then be considered a sufficient guaranty of the safety of British American interests that a Colonial Secretary sat in the British Cabinet. Some more special representation in Downing Street, or at St. James's, would then be considered essential when the relations between British America and any foreign power came under discussion. But in whatever way the connecting link between these Colonies and the Mother Country was maintained, the latter forming, as they would, a compact State, embracing a vast territory rich in untold resources, a State advancing in wealth and strength with almost unparalleled strides and inhabited by a free and aspiring people, would form a nation which *no* outside power *could* venture to injure, or to insult ; and if anything of the kind were attempted, British America *would* not submit to it. Although still a dependency of the British Crown and a section of the British Empire, the North American Colonies would then be entitled to and would receive from all foreign powers the consideration and respect due to an independent nation, and to a nation of the first rank. The people of this country would also, *as* British Americans, then receive that consideration among foreigners the absence of which has been deeply felt and complained of by almost every North American Colonist who has passed beyond the borders of his native Province.

The circumstances in which the North American Colonies are now placed considered in connection with their future capabilities as compared with those of most other countries, render it incumbent

upon them to make the most of their means and opportunities. We mean that it is incumbent upon them, not merely with a view to their own selfish ends, but in order fitly to discharge their responsibilities to the human race in the aggregate. Great and solemn responsibilities seem to be imposed upon British America and a lofty and bright career marked out for it, by the capabilities of its situation. The poetical and popular legend that "Westward the star of empire holds its course" may not be so entirely true as to authorise its employment as a premise in an argument; but its truth seems to be borne out in a great measure by the history of the civilized world.

The countries from which the monarchs of the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, in the earliest ages of history, dictated laws to the world, are now among the most desert and barbarous upon earth. The jackall roams undisturbed upon the site of Ninevah and the crocodile may sport in the waters which sweep over the ruins of Babylon; and it is considered among the great triumphs of modern learning, skill, and ingenuity that the spot where either of these wondrous cities once stood can now be pointed out. Egypt also which once from its gigantic palaces radiated wisdom and glory over the world may now be called figuratively and is almost literally, a desert. Egypt, although waking to a new life, is governed by a vassal of the weakest sovereign in Europe; and its social position is but little superior to its political rank. Greece, their successor in the race of civilization and the possession of empire, is now a chaos of marble ruins. As a nation she has just commenced the toilsome task of undoing the work of nineteen centuries of barbarism. The same dark tide has swept over her still mightier successor, Rome.

Coming down to a comparatively modern period, we find the sceptre of the civilized world swayed

in turn by various nations of Western Europe; although now Britain, if any, may claim the rank of mistress of the World. But are we to suppose that Europe, will continue to hold that proud position at the head of the World which she has occupied for the last five, or six, centuries? In the present aspect of that continent, one may well ask, in some perplexity, where next will the sun of civilization extend its brightest rays? Where next will Truth take her strongest stand in the great warfare of opinions? and what country shall next be the instructress of nations and the glory of the world? Presuming that the development of men, or of nations, in all that can enoble them, or add to their permanent strength, can take place only under conditions of civil freedom and security of freedom, the prospects of Europe, for many, many years, appear gloomy in the extreme. The present condition of that quarter of the world is obviously that of a smouldering volcano about to break forth; and we believe the most of those now living in the world will yet feel the earthquake shocks when the eruption does come. Even now, comparatively silent as Europe is, there is, in almost its every corner, a terrible life and death struggle going on between Liberty and Despotism; and through the stillness we may frequently hear the growling thunder that forbodes the coming political storm. In France, Italy, the Austrian Empire, and most parts of Germany, we see regal power, long the aggressor, now "with terror and with toil" grappling with the shackled and maddened people to bind yet heavier chains upon them, just as we may have seen a sane man in mortal struggle with a maniac. The condition of Spain, sad although it is, is better than theirs; for her spoke in Fortune's wheel has, in its revolution, commenced to move upwards. If Russia is more quiet, it is because she is more barbarous; for there the millions of serfs

turn not against the despotic heel that crushes them only because they do not know that they are trodden upon. The Scandinavian nations are cowed by the perpetual menace of Russia, a power which, like a huge iceberg, sheds a chill over all which hang upon its shores and threatens, every moment, to crush them beneath its weight. But neither the Czar of Russia, nor any other absolute monarch will be able long to repress the uprising of the people of Europe. The maniac, although a maniac, will be free. And although it may be said as an excuse for holding the people in abject submission, that, like the waters of a river from which a long standing obstruction has been removed, when once free they will deluge the land and overwhelm every work of human hands that they meet in their torrent like course, the deluge is none the less inevitable nevertheless. Pile the dam as high as you will, the waters beyond it will still mount higher ; and the longer the flood is repressed the more terrible will be its power when freed.

We can but indicate, without attempting to describe those aspects of the affairs of Europe which we believe to bear upon our subject. That the oppressed nationalities of Europe are about commencing openly to battle for freedom, appears all but certain. Every unsuccessful attempt will, it is quite certain, make the condition of that continent worse than it was before. And when the day of final success does come, as come it must, there must still a long and troubled period of probation elapse before Europe can settle down in peace and prosperity ; for it would be as useless to expect a child to leap from his nurse's arms into the rank and society of adult men and there discharge creditably all the duties pertaining to their experienced condition, as to suppose that a nation just freed from the restraints of despotism will, until taught by experience, evince a faculty of rational self government. From these causes

we may anticipate that a long night of wars and tumults with all their sad concomitants, is about to settle upon Europe—a night none the less dark from the certainty that it will end in a bright morning at last.

With such dark clouds obscuring the firmament of Europe, is it unreasonable to suppose that “the Star of Empire” will shortly take its course to the skies of some country, or countries, beyond the oceans which girt the Old World? If so, some of the British Colonies must be the favored lands, for the United States of America have already proved a miserable failure. We are not going to repeat the oft and vainly uttered assertion that Britain too has passed its culminating point and is now on the decline. Whether this is the fact, or not, need not change the drift of our remarks. It seems, at all events, clear that any important accessions of national strength and influence which Britain may hereafter receive must come through and by her Colonies. The time must come before long when, like the aged father who sees himself outstripped by the youthful vigor of his children yet lives a new and more eventful life in them, our Mother Country must be content to rely mainly upon the strength and found her brightest hopes upon the deeds of her Colonial offspring. She may be the centre of gravity around which they revolve; but their’s must be the substance—the momentum which shall move the world.

There is no part of those vast colonial possessions which seems, at the present time, so admirably calculated to form in itself a great and powerful empire—whether wholly independent, or one of a federation—as that section forming the North American Provinces. Whilst, with this object in view, the advantages which British America now possesses are unsurpassed, the obstacles which would naturally impede its success are fewer and more inconsiderable than would be met with by



any other country on earth. We are not disposed to inculcate any fatalistic dogma of "manifest destiny." As a general rule the manifest destiny of nations, as of individuals, is what they themselves determine to make it. The British Americans should therefore be up and at work carving out their own national destiny and determined to make it a glorious one; and not wait to see what the chances of the times will do for them. Destiny has already brought them into a position to take the flood in the tide which leads on to fortune and, in their case, to national splendour and to the command of at least the New World. They will be failing in their "mission" both in what concerns themselves and the human race in general if they allow the golden opportunity to pass.

We have endeavoured, as well as the small space which we could devote to the subject would permit, to show that the peculiar responsibilities of the British Americans, as at present situated, demand that they should strive to attain the position and the higher responsibilities of a respectable and potent nationality. There is every reason to believe that the longings of the people themselves tend in that direction. Whether that tendency is sufficiently strong to lead to an early consummation of so desirable a result, is the only question. The desire, on the part of the British Americans, for national eminence is, of course, rather an ambitious feeling than the result of a conviction of great public duties to be performed. It is useless to enquire into the causes of such a feeling. It is enough for our present purpose to know that it exists, and that it is not undesirable that it should exist. The desire for national eminence is as deeply implanted in our nature and almost as nearly universal as the love of individual distinction. The more free and intelligent the people, the more widely is such a desire diffused among them and the stronger it burns. Everything in

the circumstances of the British American people tends to stimulate such a feeling. They are not, like so many others, subject to the caprices of a despotic will, or ground down by tyrannical enactments, so as to feel that existence itself must be the first, the all absorbing consideration. They have passed beyond the circle within which the bare necessities of national existence engage all the energies ; and have now some spare capital of physical and intellectual vigor which they desire to expend in what we may call the *luxuries* of nationality--a world wide name, an eminent rank, an extensive influence, and all the brilliant advantages attending them. It can have no cooling effect upon such aspirations to know that their realization must be attended with irksome burdens and harassing responsibilities, any more than the ambitions of an individual man could be checked by similar warnings. Yet the young man, and the aged one too, with all the experience of three score years and ten, still strive upwards, although certain that every new step on the ladder will bring its additional burdens and anxieties. In the case both of the nation and the individual, it is right that it should be so. Had it been otherwise, men would all still be living in wigwams, or burrowing in the earth, in primitive wretchedness, like the savages of some of the Californian plains.

The British Americans, considered as a distinct people, are an offshoot from a nation notoriously the most ambitious and the most successfully ambitious in the modern world. The view of the great achievements of the Mother Country is a constant incentive to British America to go and do likewise. It is not just to assert the unreasonableness of such a desire and to urge that in all which relates to nationality the latter country should consider itself identical with the former. It would be scarcely less reasonable to insist that, so far as the execution of all ambitious projects is concern-

ed, the individual man should merge his personal identity in the nation to which he belongs, and live *solely* for his country and without being known to do so. However closely the British Americans must and do consider themselves connected with the Mother Country, by natural affection, loyalty, political bonds, and similarity of interests, they nevertheless cannot but feel that they are a separate and distinct people. This feeling is intensified by the consciousness, that, with however much kindness they may be treated by their fellow subjects of Great Britain, they yet occupy a political rank almost immeasurably inferior to that of the latter.

Again, the natural longings of British America for national consideration, are stimulated by the immediate presence of other young nations enjoying all the distinction and marks of respect which independence gives ; but in all other respects so similarly circumstanced that the Provincialist feels constantly inclined to ask with dissatisfaction why there is this great difference between them. And what is done by Great Britain to satisfy these very natural and honorable "aspirations to be great"? Nothing whatever. We admit that she should not be expected to do much, except to refrain from throwing any obstacles in the way of the upward progress of British America. As we have already observed, the people of this country must themselves work out their own national destiny. That Great Britain will hinder their doing so after the plan we are now advocating, there seems no reason to suppose. But it is undeniable that Britain has always been in the habit of checking everything like a demonstration of distinct nationality on the part of her colonies ; and there is no reason to doubt that she will continue to manifest such a policy towards the Provinces while they continue thus disunited and comparatively powerless. This she may continue to do quietly, with the most provoking

coolness, without making any deviation from the policy pursued for centuries, and therefore without seeming to inflict any flagrant injury upon, or quite outrage any feeling of, the colonists. Wars will be engaged in which may seriously injure this country ; treaties with foreign countries will be entered into which may deeply affect our interests ; but we must silently abide by the consequences. British America will continue to see the most inconsiderable of foreign nations treated with every mark of deference, whilst it is regarded as a political nonentity.

We can think of nothing with which to compare the anomalous political position of the British Americans except the social condition of the few aboriginal Indians who still stroll about our forests and shores. These Indians have perfect liberty to come and go as they please, without their legal right to go anywhere off the public highway being acknowledged ; to abide by their own customs, provided they do not infringe any general law of the land. We acknowledge them as fellow countrymen and fellow subjects, and in cases of emergency they may claim and receive the protection of our laws ; yet we deny them the right of suffrage under our Constitution ; we possess ourselves of property without considering any claim which they may have therein ; and we frame general legislative enactments without any regard whatever to their interests. We are compelled by the evidence of our senses to acknowledge their existence ; yet in every act, public or private, of which they are not the direct object, we quite ignore their existence. In a remarkably similar manner are the more privileged fellow countrymen of these Indians treated by their fellow subjects on the other side of the Atlantic. We may enjoy our own possessions, plod on within our own borders, get as rich as we can, manage our own exclusively internal affairs, provided that in so doing we do not in

anything run counter to the wishes of our brethren at "home"; yet the latter, when not directly treating with us, act in all things as if we had no existence at all. British America seeks companionship with the parent State; Great Britain, not even recognising the manifestations of such a feeling, yet graciously bows "the very humble servant" of the least respectable of foreign nations. A notable instance of this was witnessed during the last war. In no part of Great Britain itself was there a more general and fervid zeal manifested for the national cause than in British America. This country had a disposition to do anything and everything which its limited ability would admit of to aid the Mother Country in that struggle. Offers were repeatedly made to raise colonial troops for the British army—offers which, if favorably received, would have been followed up with vigor and attended by a success which could have brought no discredit upon the British arms and would have been a source of pride and satisfaction to the colonies. The British Government coldly—and, may we not add, contemptuously?—declined the proffered services, but ran into a whole series of broils by endeavouring to enlist the mercenary vagabonds of hostile, foreign states. Judging from present appearances, the time is probably not remote when Great Britain will not feel herself in a position to reject any such offer, although humble; and will have a satisfaction in finding that these Provinces, from having become united and consequently strengthened, are in a position to render her substantial assistance.

It would be useless to ask that the British American should be placed upon the same footing, politically speaking, as the native of the United Kingdom. It would be scarcely possible to grant such a request. The one must always have a direct influence upon the Imperial Government; the other, only an indirect one. The latter must continue to occupy, in many respects, a more distinguished



position than the former. But there is no good reason why the British American should continue in a position so immeasurably inferior to that of his more favored fellow subjects. A Union of the Provinces would immediately lessen the distance between him and them; and, we may reasonably hope, ultimately annihilate it altogether. It would elevate British America to a national standing; give it moral weight in the councils of the Mother country and change the machinery which now connects them; and raise the British American people in their own estimation and in the estimation of the world.

It will be said that a Legislative Union of the Provinces will place them in a position of virtual independence with respect to the parent State as well as to other nations. Grant that it will do so. It may then be urged as an objection to such a course, that it is altogether a novel one. The position which these Provinces now occupy, is, politically speaking, quite a novel one. Men, whether individually, or in communities, are ever seeking precedents for any step they may contemplate taking. The precedent—that of the United States—which most readily presents itself to a British American's mind in thinking of this Union, leads him to contemplate a *Federal* Union, one of the worst political organizations that the art of man ever contrived. The uninventive inclination to follow slavishly the most familiar examples, causes the still existing fragment of a Canadian faction to hug the absurd and degrading idea of attaining a nationality by rebellion and annexation to the United States. We have no intention of contending that precedent should be wholly disregarded in making political changes; but it must be remembered that to contend for the necessity of an example to follow in every case is to put a stop to all human progress.

It is needless for these Provinces, in contemplating any steps towards independent nationality, to seek for a precedent which will just suit their case. They can find none. The old Roman colonies—Britain, for instance—were cast off and thrown upon their own re-

sources, owing to the inability of the parent State to protect herself, or them, from foreign conquest. They, each in turn, submitted to foreign conquest and thus became so many distinct nations. The condition of the Netherlands when rebelling against the yoke of Spain, furnishes no parallel whatever to that of British America now. The case of the United States also, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, was quite dissimilar to that of British America, at the present time. They had always enjoyed a degree of national independence hitherto unknown to these Provinces ; and at last a rupture with the Mother Country upon a matter of vital moment led, by an open rebellion, to their entire separation from her. The people of Mexico and of the great Spanish colonies of South America, took up arms against the short lived Bonaparte dynasty of Spain. Circumstances growing out of this first outbreak led them to transfer their hostility from the monarch to the kingdom which he ruled, and resulted finally in their independence. The case of Brazil just previous to its attaining independence, furnishes many points of resemblance to that of British America at the present time ; yet it too is different. Brazil, at the time of its separation from Portugal, had far outgrown the proportions of a Colonial dependency. Yet the relations between the two continued to be of the most friendly nature. Their final and complete separation was effected without bloodshed and, we might say, amicably ; yet it was brought about by a singular train of accidents such as may never occur again.

The people of British America entertain feelings of the most devoted loyalty towards their Sovereign and attachment towards Great Britain. They have no cause of complaint against the parent State which would warrant any violent measures for effecting a separation, even if they had the power of using such with effect ; nor do they desire such a separation. All they wish—all that their circumstances require, is for them to be elevated in the political scale to a national rank. This can be done, without making any wider separation between the Provinces and Great Britain than already exists, and without any political convulsions, by bringing about a Legislative Union of the

former and by some modifications of the absurd machinery of the Colonial Office. The means proposed for attaining this end are novel ; the precise object thus to be attained has had no parallel in the history of nations ; but the means and the object are not more new than the circumstances which suggest the one and demand the other.

Certainly it is no less the interest of Great Britain than of British North America, that the latter should become influential and powerful whilst still maintaining the closest connection with her. There is no independent State, however powerful, that, in the national tumults in which it has at times been involved, has not felt itself constrained to employ means and submit to indignities at contemplation of which an individual man might blush, in order to strengthen its position by forming alliances with other States. Yet the precarious nature of such alliances, the rottenness of their foundation, and their costliness to those who seek them, have become proverbial among statesmen and historians. No nation of modern times has expended more and profited less by such alliances, than Great Britain. Admit that there has been and will still be for a time reasonable pretext for pursuing such a policy, is there any reason why Britain should forever go on entreating, plotting, subsidizing, outraging her own principles, to secure allies only, in nine cases out of ten, to be cheated, or betrayed, by them at last ? The British Empire including colonies of immense extent in every quarter of the world, comprises an aggregate area of over 4 millions of square miles, and contains more than 200 millions of inhabitants. These colonies have never yet taken any conspicuous part in the great national contests in which the Mother Country has so long and with scarcely any intermission been involved. It is even argued that they are a source of weakness to Great Britain. There is certainly little prospect of any reliance being placed in them for much actual assistance so long as they continue in the humble condition of mere dependencies. But should it not be the policy of Great Britain to seek to develop the strength of her great colonial empires, to foster a national feeling in each of them, and to raise them, as op-

opportunities occur to favor such a course, from the condition of dependencies to a rank more nearly approaching that of allies ; yet of allies more closely connected to her by blood and interest than any foreign States can ever be ? Were such a policy to be commenced even now, the time could not be remote when, closely leagued with those vast colonial nations of North America, India, Australia, and The Cape—each in itself an empire—Great Britain might regard with indifference any combination of foreign powers, and indeed set the world at defiance. So far as this country is concerned, such a policy would at once be organized by bringing about, or by sanctioning, a Legislative Union of the North American Provinces.

Still keeping out of view those requirements of the present and those local wants, which naturally urge the North American Colonies towards a Union, is not a contemplation of the future which that Union would make sufficient in itself to convert any British American to an ardent advocacy of the measure ? By the mere act of a Legislative Union of Canada, New Brunswick, Novascotia, and Prince Edward Island, a nation would be founded, and one comprising a territory nearly equal to that of Great Britain, France, and Italy combined ; and quite capable of sustaining as dense a population. But there is no reason why the Union policy should be stayed here. Newfoundland is now, for all practical purposes, nearer to Canada than Ireland was to England in 1800 ; and might also come into the new arrangement. Whether so or not, the whole continental portion of British America would, of course, come under the central Government organized by the Union. Of that vast territory over which the Hudson's Bay Company now exercises a dominion which it must soon renounce, the world at large is only beginning to learn the value. Between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains there lies a tract more extensive than the whole of the organized Provinces to the Eastward of it, and possessing agricultural resources superior to theirs. It is watered by many magnificent rivers the principal of which, the Saskatchewan, ranks upon the North American Continent next in length and volume to the Mississippi and



the St. Lawrence. It is 1600 miles in length, through 1400 of which it is navigable, and affords the easiest water transit from the Atlantic ocean to the base of the Rocky Mountains. Along the valley of the Saskatchewan is also found the most direct and easiest, if not the only practicable, railway route quite across the North American Continent. In this section of British America alone might be poured the whole surplus population of Europe for the next century. This territory along with that of the now organized Provinces would, in a proportion to its area equal to that of Prussia, or a little more than half that of England, of which it is certainly capable, sustain a population of 136 millions. Westward of the Rocky Mountains again, we have another immense territory greater in extent than that watered by the Saskatchewan and its tributaries and, according to all accounts, quite equal to it in resources. In the rear of all these and stretching to the Arctic Ocean lies a still greater expanse of country usually described as a sterile and inhospitable wilderness, and tenanted only by the hardy, adventurous hunter and the Esquimaux. Yet this immense tract abounds in valuable resources, although they differ from those of the rich agricultural territories which bound it on the South. The rivers which course through it, and Hudson's Bay which it almost surrounds, contain wealth for the fisherman to an extent scarcely equalled by any other part of the world. The lands in that cold region have, of course, been but imperfectly explored as yet ; but the reports brought back by the scientific men who have visited it, lead to the belief that it abounds in mineral wealth of almost every description rendering it questionable if it is much inferior in value to any portion of this continent.

To bring these immense territories under one, vigorous, local Government ; to extend over them an active population, animated by a spirit of nationality, eager to elevate their country in the commonwealth of nations, and possessing all the means as well as the will to do so—these would be the results of a Union of the Colonies. To adopt such a measure, would be to found an Empire and an Empire which, with its vast territory, its almost unlimited resources for the deve-



lopement of internal strength, and its unrivaled advantages of geographical position, might soon sway the destinies of the New World and become, at the same time, the right arm of that power which even now is the greatest upon earth. A Legislative Union of the North American Colonies is a simple measure, easy of consummation; but the magnitude, the grandeur of the results which would spring from it, are incalculable.